ENGLISH MAJOR SURVIVAL GUIDE

STRESSED? CONFUSED? FRUSTRATED?
(do you look a little like this guy?)

This is your complete guide to:

Preregistration  Graduation  Major requirements
The core curriculum  Planning your schedule
Transfer and freshmen info  Faculty members
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Mission Statement

The USM English major is designed to lead students toward a sensitive understanding of English, American, and other literature written by men and women of the past and present who have memorably expressed their personal visions and the ideas of their times. It is structured to provide insights into critical and theoretical problems encountered by all who wish to view literature from diverse perspectives. The major also provides students with the opportunity to participate in the creative process, developing their talents through courses and workshops in fiction writing, poetry, and drama. An English major must fulfill English Major requirements (48 credits) and the Core Curriculum requirements to graduate with a B.A. degree. Other electives must be taken to complete the additional credits needed to meet the minimum of 120 required for graduation.

Please Visit Us Online

Our website serves as a resource for USM and other communities; it serves visitors looking for information about the Department of English.

The site is organized by and contains links to the following sections: About the Department, Faculty Directory, Staff Directory, Faculty Home Pages, Faculty Publications, Advising, Independent Study, College Writing, English Minor, Creative Writing Minor, Employment & Career Info, Awards & Scholarships, English Department Newsletter, English Studies Association, Words & Images, Helpful Links, Listservs, Information for Students Considering Graduate or Professional Study, English Department Homepages Worldwide, Conferences, Events Free & Open to the Public, Graduate Certificate in Theory, Literature, & Culture, Stonecoast Writer’s Conference, Stonecoast Low-Residency MFA in Creative Writing.

Distributed in print prior to registration each semester is the Department's Course Guide, which, along with older issues, is available online. The site also hosts guidelines for applying to independent studies, internships, Creative Writing and English Minor programs. An important resource especially for seniors is our Career Tips for English Majors, which contains information on how to prepare for graduate study, law school, teaching K-12, journalism and professional writing. Anyone considering graduate study in Creative Writing can link from our home page to the Stonecoast low-residency MFA’s site.

From time to time notices and/or reminders will be highlighted on our main page under the main image and above the menu.

It is important for everyone to remember that our site is in a constant state of construction. We’re always thinking of new ways to improve our site and keep it interesting. All of our active links are underlined.
Welcome from Professor Bertram, the Director of Advising

“Someone, you or me, comes forward and says: I would like to learn to live finally.”
- Jacques Derrida, from The Spectres of Marx

As the cover image suggests, the title of this pamphlet is meant to be at least a little tongue-in-cheek. Bill the Cat, whose vocabulary appears to be limited to the interjections “ack!” and “thbbst!,” isn’t as articulate as English majors; nevertheless, around finals week you might find yourself uttering something like “ack!” (apparently the result of hairballs), even as you avoid Bill’s frazzled appearance. You do not need to read this guide in order “to survive.” If your goal is merely to continue, you don’t really need to attend a university at all. Even if we mean “academic survival,” it is doubtful that anyone who might perish otherwise will survive by reading this guide. Then again, you’d be surprised at how many dreadful situations students have gotten into because they weren’t familiar with the advice proffered within these pages. They may have “survived” without the help, but they certainly would have lived better had they perused this survival guide.

And isn’t “living well” the point, not just of charting a smooth path through the English major, which is what this guide is intended to help you do, but also of obtaining an English degree? We can assume that most English majors are pursuing careers or at least have an interest in obtaining a job of some kind after graduating. Undoubtedly, finding a smooth path will take some of the anxiety and stress out of your experience here, thus giving you more energy to move on. And how about “learning to live” in the ethical sense? In his cryptic opening to the The Spectres of Marx quoted above, Jacques Derrida ruminates on what it means to want to learn to live: “But to learn to live, to learn it from oneself and by oneself, all alone, to teach oneself to live…, is that not impossible for a living being?” Perhaps this sounds too profound in this context, especially when we’ve been talking about Bill the Cat, but I don’t think it is. As an English major you will find yourself in the paradoxical situation Derrida describes: one must learn to live “alone, from oneself, by oneself” and yet one can only learn “from the other.” This is the situation you will confront both when you search for wisdom and when you fill out your English major requirements form.

Thoreau thought that he could learn to live by going out into the woods by himself “to suck out all the marrow of life.” At a university, however, we recognize that while we might read and think quite a bit on our own, the path to enlightenment can only be followed with some assistance from others. This is true both when we contemplate Derrida’s exordium and when we acquire knowledge of the basics, like knowing that English 150 doesn’t fulfill any English major requirements. Whatever your academic goals may be, they will at least be easier to pursue if you don’t have to sweat the small stuff. So I encourage you to be “self-reliant” and proactive, but also to seek assistance from a reliable faculty advisor. During your pre-registration advising sessions, approach your professor and say, “I would like to learn to live finally.”
## CORE CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

### Minimum Proficiency Requirements

- Writing proficiency (Area A) -- prerequisite for Area C
- Mathematics Proficiency (Area B) -- prerequisite for Area D

### Basic Competence

These requirements should be completed in a student's first year, but must be completed before a student completes 60 credits.

- English Composition (Area C)
- Quantitative Decision Making (Area D)
- Skills of Analysis/Philosophy (Area E)
- Writing Intensive (W)

### Methods of Inquiry/Ways of Knowing

- Performance Centered Fine Art (Area F - different department from G)
- History Centered Fine Art (Area G - different department from F)
- Literature (Area H - different prefix from I)
- Other Times/Other Cultures (Area I - different prefix from H)
- Social Sciences (Area J - different department from other J)

### Natural Science

- Natural Science - Lecture (Area K)
- Natural Science - Lab (Area K -- must correspond to K lecture)
This page lists the requirements for course areas "A" through "K" and “W” which must be fulfilled to complete the Core Curriculum. Faculty advisors, as well as those in the Dean's office, will explain how this form can help you keep track of your progress through the core curriculum.

English majors may fulfill EITHER their "Performance Centered Arts" (Area F) OR "Literature" (Area H) requirement within the English Department. However, the second requirement MUST be fulfilled outside of the English Department. If you have questions about this, ask an advisor.

**Note:** Students are responsible for knowing University policies regarding the core curriculum, USM residency, and GPA requirements for graduation. The University catalog states,

- "There can be no more than one overlap between the courses a student takes to fulfill the core curriculum requirements and the courses that count toward the student's major. "Overlap" is defined in terms of each course's three-letter prefix (e.g., ENG, SOC, WST); that is, a student may take only one course toward the core that has the prefix of the student's major. (The overlapping core course may itself also count toward the major or it may just share a prefix with the major.)"

- "For all baccalaureate degrees at the University, a minimum of 30 credit hours including at least 9 hours in the major field, must be completed while registered in the school or college from which the degree is sought (15 credit hours for associate degree programs). A student may earn no more than six of these credit hours at another campus of the University of Maine System. Unless special permission is granted by the dean of the school or college concerned to pursue work elsewhere, the work of the senior or final year must be completed at this University." The last 30 credits are considered as a student's senior or final year.

- "In addition to the minimum requirements of 120 credits for a baccalaureate degree and 60 credits for an associate degree, a candidate must (a) receive passing grades in courses required by the University, the school or college, and the major department; (b) accumulate the number of credit hours required by the school or college in which the student is registered; (c) achieve an accumulative average of not less than 2.00; (d) meet the requirements of the major department; (e) complete an Application for Degree form with the Office of the Registrar at the beginning of the semester of graduation. Responsibility for successfully completing the requirements of the program resides with the student."

A further note about core courses: although some people may tell you to "get core out of the way," it makes more sense to work on core courses (beyond the "basic competencies") throughout your years at USM. Try not to spend your junior and senior years in English courses exclusively. Continue to take courses outside of the Department that will give you perspective on the work you are doing within it.

As you near the end of your junior year, be sure to ask the Dean's Office (228 Deering Ave., Portland) to furnish you with an up-to-date evaluation of your core program. Identify any deficiencies while there is time to make them up without delaying graduation.
ENGLISH MAJOR REQUIREMENTS FORM

Name _______________________________ ID# __________________________

Address _________________________________________ Telephone: (C/W) ______________________

Date of Matriculation at USM: ________________

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MAJOR REQUIREMENTS. 48 credit hours total. All courses must be passed with at least a C- grade and 6 credit hours or more with B's. No more than 15 credit hours at the 200 level may be counted toward the major.

Prerequisites

ENG 100C, 101C, or 104C or waiver (no credit toward major) Grade________
ENG 120H or waiver (no credit toward major) Grade________

I. Introduction for Majors (3 credits):

ENG 245 Introduction to Literary Studies Grade________ Note:
ENG 245 is a prerequisite for all 300- and 400-level literature courses.

II. At least one 300- or 400-level Criticism and Theory course (3 credits)

Course __________ Grade________

III. At least one 200-, 300- or 400-level course from each of the following categories (12 credits):

Language Course __________ Grade________
Genres and Forms Course __________ Grade________
Writing (excluding ENG 201) Course __________ Grade________
Interdisciplinary and Cultural Studies Course __________ Grade________

IV. At least one 300-level course from 4 of 6 periods/areas of literature (12 credits):

Ancient and Biblical Course __________ Grade________
Medieval Course __________ Grade________
Renaissance Course __________ Grade________
Eighteenth Century Course __________ Grade________
Nineteenth Century Course __________ Grade________
Since 1900 Course __________ Grade________

V. Senior Seminar (3 credits) Course __________ Grade________

Note: Seminars may also fulfill requirements under categories II, III, and IV (but they still count as only 3 credits toward the major requirements).

VI. Electives (as needed for 48 credit hrs in major):

200-level and above - up to 6 credits of approved other-department courses.

Course __________ Grade________ Course __________ Grade________
Course __________ Grade________ Course __________ Grade________
Course __________ Grade________ Course __________ Grade________
Using the English Major Requirements Form

The form lists the categories where courses are needed to fulfill the major requirements, with respective credits, and includes an "Electives" category for the courses needed to complete the 48-credit major requirement. The English Major Requirements Form is designed to help you see where you are at any moment in your progress through the Department's program. The best way to use it is to sit down with an advisor and go through it together, but a few bits of information may help you use it to advantage yourself.

1) The most important things to notice are that the names of "categories" and "periods/areas of literature" correspond to the names of groups in University catalogs. Thus, "Classical/Biblical Backgrounds" on the form corresponds to "Classical and Biblical Backgrounds" in the English course listings of the catalog.

2) Basic courses such as "College Writing" (ENG 100C) and "Introduction to Literature" (ENG 120H) do NOT count toward the 48 credits needed at USM for an English major, although they count for graduation credit and may satisfy core requirements.

3) All students-- traditional, non-traditional, and transfer-- who begin their English majors in the fall of 1994 or later, MUST complete ENG 245 Introduction to Literary Studies before enrolling in literature courses at the 300 or 400 level. Other 200-level literature courses may be taken concurrently with ENG 245 (300-level writing courses do not have ENG 245 as a prerequisite).

4) Many students take Genre and Form courses simultaneously with ENG 245; they help to build your skills in close reading and writing about literature.

5) Try to take the Criticism, Linguistics, and Language courses in the middle of your program of English study; don't leave these courses, which strengthen analytical skills, until the end.

6) The Language Requirement may be fulfilled by courses within the English Department, by designated Linguistics courses, and by courses in a foreign language beyond the third-semester college level. Please check the Undergraduate Course Catalog for a list of other department courses that fulfill this requirement. Be aware that those courses may have prerequisites within the department that offers them.

If there is any chance that you might attend graduate school, plan to study a foreign language in college. Most Ph.D. granting programs and many M.A. granting programs will require you to demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language either as part of your application or as a requirement for graduation. Expect to demonstrate language proficiency by taking a test or a graduate level language course; beginning language courses are not part of a graduate program curriculum.

7) The Writing Requirement for English is not the same as the University’s “W” requirement. The Writing Requirement can be fulfilled by creative writing courses other than ENG 201F, or with academic writing courses offered by the English Department.

8) The Interdisciplinary and Cultural Studies requirement can be fulfilled at the 200 level with ENG 244, or at the 300-level with a range of courses that fulfill that category requirement.

9) You must take courses in four of the six historical periods listed. Do historical "backgrounds" courses--classical and/or biblical-- EARLY in your major. Such courses will help you develop contexts for understanding later literature.
10) Though some upper-level English courses fill two slots (for example, a course could fill both the Senior Seminar and the Renaissance requirements), they do NOT give you double credit toward the needed total of 48 credits. Be sure to count the number of courses you have taken, not the list of requirements fulfilled, when you are adding up your credit hours for the major.

11) Note that 6 credits of “other department” electives may be applied to the major. This policy allows students to enhance their program of study by taking courses not offered in the English Department. For example, courses in a foreign literature, cinema, a major writer or theorist, a classical language or literature could count towards the English major. This policy is NOT designed to fill up the 48 credit hours needed for the major with courses that are not directly related to the study of literature, language, or critical theory. Students should seek approval from the English Department Advisor for other -departmental courses prior to taking them. Ask your advisor for a current list of these courses.

**TRANSFER STUDENTS: After you transferred into USM, you received from the Office of Transfer Affairs, a form listing what courses from earlier school(s) were given transfer credit and what specific course correspondences were noticed. Courses given USM course numbers can go into periods of literature or other slots, but CHECK WITH THE ADVISING COORDINATOR about such courses, so that there are no surprises later about what counts for the major.

Using the Course Guide to Plan Your English Major

Before every preregistration period, the English Department publishes a Course Guide for the upcoming semester. The guide, describing courses more fully than the USM catalog, often lists texts and the kinds of papers and examinations. New and experimental courses are also described there, as well as what specific major requirement(s) each course fulfills.

As an English major, you are required to take, for example, a course that will fill the "Criticism and Theory" slot: ANY course listed in the catalog under that heading will satisfy that requirement (except those suggested as English electives). From time to time, a professor may revise a course -- like "Earlier Women Writers" and "Modern Poetry"-- and its category will change. The latest Course Guide will tell you what categories such courses belong to. Also, from time to time, a special course or seminar may be suitable to fill one of these, or other, requirements. See the Course Guide to learn about these courses.
Advice from Faculty

Professor Abrams

In the Sonora Desert Museum outside Tucson, there is a huge walk-in hummingbird cage. At first you see nothing, but quickly you sharpen your vision and you see life everywhere. Reading the remote past can be like that. Literature students sometimes complain that the past is irrelevant, dead, but then they get the knack and find it teeming with life. The critic Stephen Greenblatt captures both sides of the debate when he writes of his dangerous desire to talk with the dead. For others, reading the past is simply exotic. Do you like to travel, to speak another language, which turns out to be, strangely, your own? The novelist L.P. Hartley famously wrote, “The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there.” Booking agents are standing ready for your calls.

Professor Ashley

With an eye to job or graduate school recommendations needed in your future, make sure you get to know a few of your professors. Take advantage of their office hours to stop by and chat occasionally when you are taking their courses. Be aware that one-on-one appointments to discuss your work are not just an opportunity to improve a specific assignment but also to build a relationship. If you foresee the need to ask for a letter of recommendation, make sure the person writing has good information about your career plans and long-term aspirations as well as about the specific position or program to which you are applying. Be prepared to supply a resume and unofficial transcript if asked. And don't be afraid to remind your letter writers of arriving deadlines!! (Professors are often forgetful....)

Professor Carroll

I often find in advising that I ask students to consider a realistic course load if they are also working and have an active social/family life. End of term burnout is hard on everyone, so being careful with the number and variety of courses at preregistration can help to avoid the sense of overload and "impending doom" that a poorly-planned or overly ambitious set of courses causes. Students can rely on the experience of their advisors to help them make some of the hard choices ("But then I won't graduate in the Spring!!") that allow for a deeper intellectual experience and fuller range of activities in the long run. I suggest, then, that advisors are good resources for ensuring that "perspective" is a key term in the mix.

Professor Gish

Nothing in your university education is more important than the ability to write well—and that is inseparable from learning to read at an advanced level. The English department calls for writing in all courses, and we are also concerned to offer more courses at upper levels, including study of rhetoric and style. Whatever you do in the future, you will need to use writing, and the more you develop your ability, the more it will help you in work, in discovery, in creativity, in the joy of language.

Writing, like playing the piano, is a skill achieved through practice, but also, like music, writing requires knowledge of fundamental units. Just as one cannot play the piano without understanding scales, chords, and phrasing, one cannot write without knowledge of words, phrases, clauses, and patterns of sentences. While it is possible to play or write by ear, most musicians and writers need to learn basics first. And in both cases it requires theoretical understanding of those basics. Writing is thus both a content and a practice.
The English department is a resource for learning this essential and deeply significant content and practice. So take advantage of courses and conferences with professors to develop both your understanding and your style: it really will change your life. It helps you get and keep a job; and it helps you read Shakespeare and Jane Austen and T. S. Eliot and Stephen King and the latest blog; and, as someone said, “We read so that we will not be alone”—we write for the same reason.

Professor McGrath

Writing and literary pursuits play an important role in shaping our culture. English majors learn to write both passionately and persuasively for diverse purposes, read critically, and develop into skilled researchers. Our students are prepared for graduate study in literature, creative writing, professional and technical communication, and rhetoric and composition. Other graduates have entered teaching and publishing careers, among others. Studying English also supplements a wide array of professions such as law, advertising and public relations, and business administration and management. Technical skills may help you in an entry level position, but the kind of reading, analytical, and writing skills you learn as an English major will help you move up the organization ladder faster. For upper level positions communication skills are more important than technical skills.

Professor Muthyala

Is advising a formal process where you meet faculty to discuss your progress in the major and plan for the next semester? Yes, it is. But there can be more: advising can be about getting to know faculty as scholars and teachers; discussing various aspects of college life; sharing your experiences in other courses in and outside the major; getting information about various university offices and how they can support your pursuit of a college degree; and learning more about the significance of English Studies in higher education and the role of the humanities in preparing you to face the challenges of an extremely competitive, risk-oriented, transnational and global world.

Professor Tussing

- Make a point to work with different faculty members.
- Get out of your comfort zone—read and write in multiple genres.
- Attend readings and open mic nights
- Submit your work to *Words & Images*, or else volunteer for the magazine.
- Read your work aloud.
- Don’t take more than one creative writing class in a semester.
- Stuck on a revision? Start again from scratch.
- Look into the Stonecoast Writers’ Conference (usm.maine.edu/stonecoast_wc).
Advice from Students

Advice for Senior Year and Preparing for Grad School – from Lainie Jones

If you plan on applying to graduate school, especially Ph.D programs, you will probably have to take both the GRE and the GRE English Literature subject test. The GRE subject test is usually offered twice a year, generally in April and October. You must take it by October 31st preceding the fall you want to attend graduate school (for example, if you want to start graduate school in fall of 2015, you would have to take the test by October 31, 2014). I would recommend taking the April test so you can take the test again if you are not happy with your score and do not want to delay your applications.

The subject test is vast. The test covers everything written in English, as well as some writers from other countries such as Tolstoy, Balzac, and some of the more contemporary writers from Latin America and Africa. As there is no set English curriculum across all universities, the test tends to depend heavily on “The Canon” (writers and works considered English classics). While this is by no means a comprehensive list of everything on the test, you can expect to see plenty of questions on English poetry from the 17th century on, novels from the 18th century until now, the works (including letters, journals, and critical essays) of the Victorian writers, Shakespeare’s plays and sonnets, and Milton. There will also be questions on grammar, scansion, Ancient/Classical literature, American literature (again, mostly 18th century on), Middle English (almost always Chaucer), Old English, theory, Joyce, and world literature. You will have 2 ½ hours to complete 200 questions, and most questions will involve a fairly close reading of a long passage. The test is not designed to be finished, and the amount of reading is the most difficult thing to overcome. However, you will not need to know details about all of these works, but a little bit about a lot of works (Princeton Review outlines a pretty effective test strategy for this).

If possible, you should plan on studying for this exam for 16 weeks. Princeton Review offers a good study guide, and there are also a couple of good websites, notably Vade Mecum and Hapax Legomena. The GRE offers a practice test on its website. Princeton Review also offers a practice test, and you can search online to get older versions of the test. I strongly recommend taking the practice tests as often as possible in order to get used to the amount of reading involved in the test. The practice tests are a bit simpler than the actual test, so don’t be surprised.

You will also have to take the regular GRE test, which will require about 6 weeks of study. This test will cover vocabulary, writing skills, and math (mostly geometry and college algebra, with some statistics). Unlike the subject tests, the GRE is offered continually, usually once a month year-round. It is a good idea to space the tests a few months apart so you don’t get overwhelmed and you have enough time to concentrate on each test.

Advice for Transfer Students – from Colleen Gilbert

No two college English departments will ever be alike. Before transferring to USM, I’d been an English major at two other institutions and I have yet to find any significant overlap in the curricula beyond the most general categories. There are the various literary periods, the plethora of canonical authors, the constant revision and growth of criticism; but every English department, perhaps more so than most other majors, is shaped by its professors and its students. My other schools had medievalists and 19th century specialists, but I’d never seen a specific course on Medieval Popular Culture or Victorian Ghost stories. This disparity in course selection can make it difficult when transferring. Sometimes those credits you took before in a 300- level class transfer as a 200- level, or sometimes those credits don’t count at all toward the major. Don’t trust the initial printout of transferred credits. If you think something should count differently toward the major, talk to your advisor in the department or to a professor you trust. Sometimes the computer that calculates your credits makes mistakes, as it did in abundance on my initial transfer credit evaluation, and sometimes, if you make a strong enough case,
the department will reconsider and count that Shakespeare in Film class as the Renaissance requirement or a Science Fiction and Fantasy writing course toward the writing minor. Don’t put it off until the semester before graduation. The sooner you figure out exactly where you stand in the major, the sooner you can be sure you’re taking the right classes to fulfill the major and graduate on time. There are so many interesting and different classes offered in the USM English department. You don’t want to find yourself repeating a course on Ancient Literature because you didn’t bother to point out you already had an equivalent class at your previous institution. Sometimes, though, there will be overlap in course material between classes from your previous school and your current ones at USM. Don’t think of this as a negative! Just because you’ve studied Chaucer before doesn’t mean you won’t learn something new. Every professor has a unique take on his or her subject and the presence of different students will always make for new conversations and questions. Being open to new perspectives, new details, and new opinions on the part of both professors and fellow students can be difficult when transferring, but staying interested, engaged, and open will make being an English major at USM a wonderful experience. Ask questions, voice your own opinions, and above all, seek out your professors beyond the classroom. They have office hours, email addresses, and numerous phone numbers. USM is the first school where I’ve had English professors supply home or cell numbers. They want to be bothered with questions and concerns or even just an update on how that paper revision is going. As a commuter school where many of us are non-traditional students with numerous outside obligations, making the time to engage in the major can be difficult, but it’s worth it. For the first time in my college career I have personal relationships with several of my professors that go beyond the academic. I’ve sat in offices over coffee and debated the economy, discussed the virtues of acupuncture, and heard delightful family anecdotes. Reaching out to professors can make the classroom more enjoyable, make it easier to be added to that already-full class at the start of a semester, and help if you ever need a recommendation for a job or graduate school. Beyond the professors, it’s important to recognize that although you may never be friends with every student you ever see in every English class you ever take, the major is not so big that there won’t be familiar faces from class to class. Make an effort to talk to the people around you. Finding a community within the major is not as impossible as some seem to think. Yes, many of us commute. Yes, there is often a wide array of ages and backgrounds represented in any given class, but I have never met someone who didn’t, to some degree, enjoy chatting before and after class. It also makes it easier come time for a group project or if you need notes if you already know a name or two. Talk to your advisor, your professors, your fellow classmates. Figure out early what classes you need to finish the major. Think of transferring as a fresh start with a new chance to establish yourself in the department. And have fun!
Making the Most of Your Major

Pay Attention to Scheduling: Be aware that courses in certain required areas are not offered in all day/time/semester configurations. Consult your advisor and fit such courses into your schedule well before you near graduation and discover you need them. Plan to balance your course load. Try not to spend your junior and senior years in English courses exclusively. Continue to take courses outside of the department that will give you perspective on the work you are doing within it. You can do this by spreading out your core courses, or by working on a minor outside the English Department.

Study a Foreign Language: Study a foreign language. Studying a foreign language is an important part of any liberal arts education. In addition, graduate schools will demand that you demonstrate reading knowledge of at least one and often two foreign languages to complete an advanced degree. Some schools require that you provide evidence of your foreign language skills as a criterion of acceptance to their programs. If you have even faint notions about going on to graduate school, inform yourself of the need for foreign language study and begin that study soon.

Get to Know Faculty: Build relationships with faculty members. Knowing faculty will make you feel a part of the English Department and the University. Faculty are also a good source of information about work-study, internship and research opportunities. Eventually, you may need to ask for letters of recommendation, and it’s important that faculty know you. Also, take courses from a variety of professors with different outlooks and emphases. Get as many perspectives on English study as you can.

Choose a Minor: Find opportunities to take courses in Art, Music, Theater, History, Philosophy, Women’s Studies, and other areas that interest you. Though not required for the English major, all give valuable perspectives on literary study. You may want to minor in one of these fields. A minor can round out your education and allow you to explore an area of interest you may have outside of English.

Consider Independent Studies: Independent Studies provide for in-depth, individual projects under the guidance of a faculty member. It allows you to focus on an area of study that is not covered by course offerings. Independent Studies can also be a good opportunity to produce a paper that you can use as a writing sample, which is required for many graduate programs.

Consider Study Abroad: Study abroad provides opportunities for personal growth and getting to know another culture and way of life. This is a valuable commodity in today's global society. Having had an overseas study experience shows that you're motivated, inquisitive, and willing to try new things—all very appealing qualities in an employee, and to graduate programs.

Keep an Eye on Your GPA: Use all of your study skills to maintain a good GPA! You may think that it’s okay to blow off one of those core courses, but getting a bad grade in any course can have a negative impact on your overall GPA. Employers and graduate programs look at GPA’s when making decisions about hiring, acceptance, and scholarships and financial aid. You can graduate with honors in English by maintaining a B+ average in you major courses.

Develop Good Reading Habits: Cultivate the habit of reading widely in books, magazines, and newspapers.
Freshman and Transfer Student Guide

New to college?

Moving to college and adjusting to college life can be an overwhelming experience. As a new college student, your study workload will be heavier and tougher than high school ever was. It will require more time, more organization and a greater commitment on your part than ever. Your personal relationships have to be built all over again since everybody around you is new. You may also be surprised to find yourself occasionally having to make moral decisions you've never faced before. Consider the consequences of your actions in advance, what you've been taught, and how it might look on your record someday. However confident you might be, there are going to be moments of doubt and frustration and even loneliness.

When it comes to your classes, keep in mind that college-level classes are structured very differently than the ones you took in high school. You should be prepared for classes that are organized around the professors giving lectures and you, the student, taking notes. Also keep in mind that the course number of a class matters significantly to the amount of work that will be expected of you outside of the classroom. A class at the 300 level is going to require more reading, writing, and studying hours than a class at the 100 level. This is also pertains to the amount of credits the class is worth; a class worth 5 credits is going to be much more intensive than a class that is worth 3. Below is a handy-dandy formula that you can fill out to help you decide how many hours a week outside the classroom you should be studying to make sure you do well in your classes:

Easy class credit hours \( \times 2 = \) ________
Average class credit hours \( \times 3 = \) ________
Difficult class credit hours \( \times 4 = \) ________
Total ________

New to USM?

As a transfer student, you might think you know all about college-level courses. However, it is not uncommon for students transferring from one kind of educational experience to another to find the transition to be more difficult than they thought it would be. Students who transfer may discover that classes are larger, scholarly expectations differ from one school to another, and academic policies differ widely from one institution to another. While many transfer students adapt quickly, others may feel lonely, unsure, under-prepared and overwhelmed. If you are feeling this way, you are not alone and because of it, many transfer students do not do as well academically in their first or second semesters at a new institution as they did at their previous schools.

TIPS for adjusting:

1) Let your academic advisor help you select courses and review your requirements. If you have declared a major in English, you will be assigned to the Advising Coordinator for your first year at USM. You should plan to meet with an advisor once classes have started so that you can review your overall program and make plans toward the completion of your degree.

2) Balance your course load. If you lost a few credits when transferring, do not try to make up for them by over-enrolling your first semester. Wait until you know what USM courses are like. During your first semester you may want to take introductory courses toward your core curriculum, or balance upper-level courses in your intended major with lower-level, introductory and core courses. A full-time course load is 12 credits. Some
students take 15. If you register for 15 or 16 credits your first semester and begin to feel overwhelmed, you can drop a course mid-semester while remaining a fulltime student. If possible, see your advisor before you drop a course. You will also need to pay attention to deadlines. Note that there is a deadline for dropping a course without a “W” (end of the second week) and a deadline for withdrawing WITH a “W” (mid-semester). The “W” does not affect your GPA or overall academic record.

A word about working: Students with financial burdens should keep in mind that registering for a full-time course load while working much more than 20 hours a week at a job may prove excessively counter-productive. Failing courses and repeating them is ultimately VERY costly because you may need to re-take the course(s)—and you may end up on academic probation or on the dismissal list. Just because you were able to work full-time and go to school successfully in the past does not mean you can do so at USM. Contact Financial Aid for information about student loans.

3) Utilize ALL of your academic skills: Attend every class; leave extra time for class and exam preparation and for researching, writing and REVISING your papers before you submit them. Faculty expect students to be independent and self-motivated, to follow the syllabus without reminders, to review handouts and course notes independently, and to complete every homework and reading assignment on time, even if the specific material is not under discussion. USM professors also expect students to think critically about the material on their own; that means thinking of questions as you read or prepare for class, breaking down the material into smaller units of analysis, and grasping the concepts related to assignments. Your instructors will expect you to contribute actively to discussions, and participation may factor in the grade. Therefore, you need to prepare thoroughly before each class and review notes from previous classes. The extra review time before and/or after each class will render exam preparation far more productive and rewarding. In addition, if you need to meet with the instructor during the semester, you will be thankful for the extra hours of preparation—especially if you need to address concerns about an assignment or request accommodation of some sort (e.g., missing a class due to illness or a family event). Instructors are much more sympathetic to students who are well prepared and knowledgeable about the course material than to students who have missed classes or appear to be behind with the assignments.

4) Develop and utilize good time management skills. Use an academic planner. Review the syllabus for each class CAREFULLY for information about grading policies and due dates. Mark down all due dates in your planner. Review the section of the handbook on time management, and do a personal time survey. At minimum, expect to spend approx. 2-3 hours per credit PER WEEK in studying (that means on average 20-30 hours/week—or as long as it takes to complete your work and prepare for class!).

5) Seek out assistance. Visit the Learning Center for assistance if you are at all doubtful about your study skills or if you are feeling overwhelmed. Bring assignment directions or drafts of essays, and writing tutors will help you at any point in the writing process, from brainstorming to final editing. You do the work. The tutor's role is to help you become a better student. If you want a qualified student to look at your work and talk it over, a tutor is a very helpful sounding board. The Portland Learning Center hours are Monday to Friday, 8 A.M. - 4:30 P.M. Appointments are required. Please call 780-4288. For other forms of support, contact your academic advisor.

6) Interact with faculty when possible. USM faculty members are interested in their students and willing to help. However, you must take the initiative in seeking contact with faculty. You should also follow a few simple rules. 1) Respect office hours as stated on the syllabus. 2) Behave respectfully both in class and out. 3) If and when emailing your instructor, use good email etiquette: do not write breezy, chatty, very lengthy, or poorly punctuated emails. Do not WRITE ALL IN CAPS or in funny colors. Ask for an appointment if you have a lot of questions since it is difficult to respond in writing to very detailed concerns. Finally, sign your full name to every email and remind the instructor of which class you are in if it isn’t obvious from the email. 4) Go prepared to class AND office hours. If the instructor recognizes you from class because you sit toward the front
and raise your hand and participate, he/she may be far more kindly disposed toward you than toward a student who sits in the back, looks sleepy, and never contributes. Likewise, if you meet with a professor, you should at least be knowledgeable about course material that has been covered in the class thus far.

Why meet with faculty? Obviously you do not need to meet with all of your teachers, but it is wise to develop relationships with 2-3 faculty members in your area of interest, either in your major or a related field. You may need to get information about research or internship opportunities. You may also want information about graduate programs, and eventually, you may need to ask for a letter of recommendation. On the other hand, you may simply want to clarify something a teacher has said in class, ask about an assignment, or review an exam or paper. Students who avoid contact with teachers and advisors may complain of feeling “anonymous.” One can alleviate that feeling by maintaining regular contact with a few teachers and advisors—but again, such contact requires some initiative.

7) Get involved in at least one student group, campus or department organization. Students who get involved in one way or another have a richer experience, learn more about themselves and others, meet people, feel more connected to the college, and may even do better academically. Getting involved on campus is a great way to gain leadership experience and strengthen your résumé. A list of student organizations at USM is available on the web at http://www.usm.maine.edu/studentlife/involve/

8) Learn about the library. You may perform a good deal of research over the internet, but you may actually need to visit the library as well, and there are computer terminals within the library with access to the library collection—URSUS—and other databases and indexes. The library system appears vast at first but once you begin using it, it will become more and more familiar. Make it yours! Visit http://usm.maine.libguides.com/tutorials for help when starting research.

9) Learn about USM’s policies. Familiarize yourself with the Academic Policies section of the Undergraduate Course Catalog. You should be given a catalog during orientation. There is also an online link to the catalog at http://www.usm.maine.edu/catalogs/index.html.

10) Get Help. Seek out University Counseling services at 207-780-4050, if you feel overwhelmed, homesick, stressed, or depressed.

Adapted from Rutgers University Office of Academic Services @ http://sasundergrad.rutgers.edu/academics/current/transfer/successguide.html
How to Succeed in the Classroom

Your academic attitude is a major factor in your success at University of Southern Maine. You share responsibility, along with your professor and other students, for creating a productive learning environment. Showing respect towards your professors and other classmates initiates a productive atmosphere and enhances your ability to learn to your fullest potential.

While individual faculty may have various policies regarding the use laptops/electronics in class, eating, taking bathroom breaks, etc., there are some general guidelines that will apply to all off your classes.

Attend class and pay attention. Do not ask the instructor to go over material you missed by skipping class or not concentrating. If you have difficulty understanding the presented material, ask the instructor to assist you.

Try not to come to class late or to leave early. If you must enter late, do so quietly and do not disrupt the class by walking between the class and the instructor. Do not leave class early unless it is an absolute necessity. If you know in advance you will need to leave class early, sit near an exit and inform the instructor prior to class.

Do not talk with other classmates while the instructor or another student is speaking. If you have a question or comment, please raise your hand, rather than start a conversation with your neighbor. Others in the class may have the same question.

Show respect and concern for others by not monopolizing class discussion. Allow others time to give their input and ask questions.

Turn off all electronic devices, including but not limited to cell phones, pagers, beeping watches. If, due to work or family obligations, you need to remain in contact, inform your instructor ahead of time and set these devices to be as unobtrusive as possible.

Avoid audible and visible signs of restlessness. These are both rude and disruptive to the rest of the class.

Focus on class material during class time. Sleeping, talking to others, doing work for another class, reading the newspaper, checking email, exploring the internet, etc., are unacceptable and can be disruptive.

Do not pack book bags or backpacks to leave until the instructor has dismissed the class.

Adapted from Jamestown Community College
Advising FAQs

Who is my advisor?

If you are a new major, you will want to set up a meeting with the Director of Student Advising, Professor Ben Bertram. He will set up an advising file for you, orient you to the major, answer any questions you may have, and assign you a faculty advisor. He can be reached by phone at 780-4944, and by email at bertram@usm.maine.edu. You may sign up to see him during his regular office hours; there is a sign-up sheet on his door at 311B Luther Bonney. He will also arrange to see advisees with scheduling conflicts outside of his regular office hours; just contact him for an appointment.

As soon as possible, you should choose a permanent advisor based on your interests and preferences. This may be your assigned advisor, but you might find that you would like to work with another faculty member. At any time, you may request a change of advisor. Change forms are available in the English Department Office in 311 Luther Bonney. Once you have completed this form, our administrative assistant will process all changes of advisor. You can find out who your advisor is by going to the Student Center in MaineStreet. Your advisor’s name appears in a box on the right hand side of the page.

When should I meet with my advisor?

Students are also encouraged to meet with their advisors at any other time during the year to discuss issues such as core requirements, progress towards completing the degree in English, choosing a minor, and preparing for post-graduate goals.

All students in the English Department must meet with an advisor during preregistration to discuss course selection, develop a schedule, and to receive a PIN.

How do I find my advisor?

In the English Department, you will find a list of faculty, their office hours, phone numbers, and email addresses. If, for any reason, you have difficulty getting in touch with your advisor, you may contact the Chair of the English Department, Professor John Muthyala.

Preregistration Suggestions for English Majors

How should I get advising during preregistration?

There are two systems for advising during preregistration. During the first week of the preregistration period, there will be English Department faculty available for walk-in advising. Please consult the published schedule to see exactly when faculty will be in the office. Remember that you may have to wait to see your advisor if you choose to use the walk-in system. Walk-in advising does not preclude traditional advising; you may consult the walk-in schedule to see when your advisor will be available, or you may contact your advisor to make an individual appointment.
Why preregister?

Not registering in the preregistration period often means that junior and senior majors will have difficulty enrolling in classes they need in order to graduate. Failure to preregister also results in the cancellation, by the department or the Dean's Office, of under-enrolled courses.

Therefore, for your own sake and for that of the department, PREREGISTER. See an advisor or other English faculty member who would be helpful to you and knowledgeable about the major and core requirements. Discuss your situation, plan a likely program, and then preregister for it. If you discover when the next semester begins that your schedule must be changed, you can change it during the Add-Drop period (though, keep in mind, your options will likely be reduced).

How should I prepare for preregistration advising?

There are a few things that you should do prior to your appointment. Coming to your appointment with the following things accomplished will help to make your course selection and registration process very productive.

Before Your Appointment:

- Pick up and review the English Department Course Guide for the next semester’s courses. It is available in the English Department.
- Go to MaineStreet and search the schedule of classes. Make a Wish List, print it out, and bring it with you to your advising appointment. Be sure to have alternative courses chosen.
- Review the Core curriculum requirements in your USM catalog or your Guide to Graduation. See what remaining requirements you have.
- Review your English Major Requirements Form to see what remaining requirements you have. Blank copies are available in the English Department Office. You may find it useful to keep a filled out copy for yourself, so that you can check off requirements as you go along.
- Fill out a Graduation Planner to see how close you are to meeting your goals for graduation. Graduation Planners are available at on the USM Advising Portal—you can also use the web site search engine to find it, fill it out, and print it.
- Prepare a balanced schedule. Do not take all English courses or all Core courses in one semester. Do not take more than one reading-heavy class in a semester; one novel class per semester is enough.
- Check to see if you have met proficiencies and course prerequisites. For example, English 100C and English 120H/W are prerequisites for English majors, and you must complete ENG 245 before you take 300-level courses. ENG 150H/W does not count toward the major. It may be repeated only once for credit.

At Your Pre-Registration Appointment You Can Expect to:

- Confirm your remaining core and major requirements.
- Design a schedule that fits your needs.
- Get your PIN and advisor's approval, which you need in order to register.

If you are not prepared for your appointment, you may have to reschedule. Your advisor can consult with you about the schedule you have prepared, but cannot create a schedule for you. Coming to an
advising appointment unprepared can delay your ability to register, and you may find that classes you wanted to take have closed while you were waiting for a new appointment.

Preparing for Graduation

Throughout Your Career:

There are some basic graduation requirements that you should keep in mind throughout your career as a USM student.

- You must complete the Core Curriculum in order to graduate.
- Students who plan to graduate with a Bachelor's Degree need to complete a minimum of 120 credit hours. These credits are comprised of (minimally) the requirements of the Core Curriculum and your major. Depending on the number of credits required by your major, you will likely require additional credits in order to achieve the minimum of 120 hours. Often students are able to use these additional credits to create a minor, a second major, or to take elective courses. Contact your academic advisor early to design an academic plan that will work for you.
- The English Department requires that you pass all courses for the major with a C- or better, and at least two courses must be passed with Bs. If you receive a grade lower than a C- in a course you planned to count towards the major, you will have to repeat it for a better grade. Otherwise, it may count only as a University elective.

Applying for Graduation:

- Students should plan to meet with their English Department advisor the semester BEFORE they intend to apply to graduate. It is important to come in early, so that any deficiencies in your progress towards graduation can be remedied before you plan to leave the University. Requirements cannot be waived because it comes as a surprise that they are necessary, so you want to make sure that there are no surprises that will delay your graduation!
- To prepare for your appointment, print out your current unofficial transcript. Review it and be prepared to ask any questions that you have about core and major requirements, University electives, and courses not applied toward your degree. You should also plan to meet with advisors of any other majors or minors you have declared.
- EARLY in the semester that you plan to graduate, go to the Registrar’s Office page on the USM website and download an Application for Degree. Submitting this paperwork will start the process of “graduate certification,” during which the Dean’s office, the English Department Advisor, and departments of other majors/minors that you have declared will review your records to make sure that you will have fulfilled the requirements for graduation with successful completion of the courses for which you are enrolled in your last semester.

USM holds one Commencement Ceremony each May. If you graduate in December, you are encouraged to march in the May Commencement Ceremonies!
HELP US KEEP IN TOUCH WITH ALUMNI!

The English Department is now reaching out to its alumni. We want to keep in touch with our graduates, find out what they are doing, and open up new channels of communication such as USM social events and a Facebook page. We hope to create a means for current students to network with former students. Please help us out by keeping the English Department informed about what you are doing after you graduate. Two things you can do:

JOIN OUR NEW ALUMNI FACEBOOK PAGE

Our Facebook page currently has 64 followers. It is for current and former alumni in the English Department (Majors and Minors) and friends and supporters of the Department. It is sponsored by the Student Affairs Committee of the USM Department of English. This is a great opportunity for you to chat online with alumni from the English Department.

COME TO SOCIAL EVENTS AND HELP PLAN THEM

The English Department will be having social events for alumni, English majors, and English Department faculty every so often. Our alumni have a wealth of information about what you can do with an English major. It’s a good opportunity for networking and making new friends. If you would like to get involved in planning these events, join the English Students Association (see the Director of Advising for more information).

WHAT THEY ARE DOING:

Here are a few samples of what alumni have sent us:

INA DEMERS arrived at USM in 1999 with an Indonesian BA degree in teaching English as a foreign language. After receiving a BA in English at USM she went on to obtain a Masters for Teaching & Learning in the Extended Teacher Education Program (ETEP) with a full certification to teach K-8 teacher and a certificate to teach English as Second Language. She is currently employed by the Portland Public Schools and LearningWorks, specifically at East End Community School in Portland, Maine.

BENJAMIN RYBECK is currently in the MFA program at the University of Arizona, where he teaches creative writing and composition, and is the editor-in-chief of Sonora Review. He is beginning to place his stories in small literary journals, both in print and online. Recently, he paid his bills with a $1,000 prize he won for his writing. At USM, he ran Words and Images and the English Students Association, and participated in the Stonecoast Writers' Conference, thus finding real-life experience in the realms of publishing, organization, and teaching.

ERINN RIDGE is now a student in a graduate program in Mental Health Counseling at Lesley University. She says the English major at USM played a significant role in her approach to graduate studies today. She has applied the analytical skills she acquired as an English major to her work with clients in improving their mental health.

GERARD BIANCO graduated in December of 2010 with a minor in Creative Writing. He is currently publishing a new book, a mixture of short stories, poetry and 2 plays entitled Poor Choices.
Important Numbers and URL’s

Office of Undergraduate Admission     207-780-5670     www.usm.maine.edu/admit
Transfer Affairs                      207-780-5340     www.usm.maine.edu/admit/transfer.html
Student Success Centers               207-780-4604     http://www.usm.maine.edu/success/
Office of the Registrar               207-780-5230     www.usm.maine.edu/reg
Department of Residential Life        207-780-5240     www.usm.maine.edu/reslife
Office of Student Billing             207-780-5200     www.usm.maine.edu/buso
Office of Student Financial Aid       207-780-5250     www.usm.maine.edu/fin
University Health Services (Gorham)   207-780-5411     www.usm.maine.edu/health
Support for Students with Disabilities 207-780-4706    www.usm.maine.edu/oassd
Department of Athletics               207-780-5430     www.usm.maine.edu/athletics
Office of Academic Assessment         207-780-4383     www.usm.maine.edu/testing
Office of the Dean of Student Life    207-228-8200/4090 www.usm.maine.edu/studentlife/
Univ. Computing Technologies & Software Services  207-780-4029 www.usm.maine.edu/computing
USM HELPDESK                         "           "           "           "           "           "           /support/helpdesk.jsp
USM Bookstore (Portland/Gorham)       207-780-5476/4070 www.usm.maine.edu/books
USM Bookstore (Lewiston-Auburn)       207-753-6520     www.usm.maine.edu/books
Department of English                207-780-4291     www.usm.maine.edu/eng
The Faculty

Richard H. Abrams, Ph.D., State University of New York at Buffalo.
*Interests*: Shakespeare, Dante, renaissance studies, cultural criticism.

Kathleen M. Ashley, Ph.D., Duke University.
*Interests*: Medieval literature, autobiography studies, African-American literature, cultural theory, contemporary women writers.

*Interests*: Fiction writing, contemporary fiction, film and literature.

Benjamin Bertram, Ph.D., University of California, San Diego.
*Interests*: Early modern studies, Shakespeare, 16th & 17th c. English literature, critical theory, and cultural studies.

Lorrayne Carroll, Ph.D., The Johns Hopkins University.
*Interests*: Early American literature, captivity narratives, historiography, women's studies.

Lucinda Cole, Ph.D., Louisiana State University.
*Interests*: 18th-century English literature and culture, gender studies, cultural theories.

Ann Dean, Ph.D., Rutgers University.
*Interests*: Composition, 18th-century American and English literature, print culture and history of the book.

Annie Finch, Ph.D., Stanford University.
*Interests*: Poetry, prosody, women’s writing, literary translation.

Nancy K. Gish, Ph.D., University of Michigan.

Jane Kuenz, Ph.D., Duke University.

Deepika Marya, Ph.D., University of Massachusetts.
*Interests*: Postcolonial theory and literature, cultural studies.

Francis C. McGrath, Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin.
*Interests*: 19th- and 20th-century British literature, Irish literature, theory.

John Muthyala, Ph.D., Loyola University, Chicago.

Gerald Peters, Ph.D., University of Illinois, Urbana.
*Interests*: Continental & comparative literature, psychoanalytic theory, autobiography.

Willard J. Rusch, Ph.D., University of Illinois, Urbana.
*Interests*: Old English literature, historical phonology, linguistic theory, horror and fantasy literature.

Richard Swartz, Ph.D., University of California, San Diego.
*Interests*: Romantic literature and culture, critical theory, and cultural studies.

Justin Tussing, M.F.A., University of Iowa Writers’ Workshop.
*Interests*: Fiction writing, Contemporary fiction

Shelton Waldrep, Ph.D., Duke University.
*Interests*: 19th-century British literature and culture, critical theory, aesthetics, and cultural studies.

Lisa Walker, Ph.D., Louisiana State University.
*Interests*: Modern American literature, feminist theory, and women and gender and queer studies.